EPA VIRTUAL GAINING EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME REPORT

On the virtual placement at the "*Ludwig-Maximilians-University Hospital, Munich, GERMANY*"

Realised "*July to September 2022*"

By "*Eren Yıldızhan*"

REPORT:

I am Eren Yıldızhan, a psychiatrist working in Bakırköy Mazhar Osman Research and Training Hospital in Istanbul, Turkey. I have participated in the Online Gaining Experience Programme of Ludwig-Maximilians-University (LMU) Hospital in July to September 2022. I did not have any preconception of how an online programme could be at the beginning. It was not meant to be an online programme at the time of application, but after the coronavirus pandemic which made international travels extremely difficult, the online option was offered as a creative solution by the Early Career Psychiatrist Committee (ECPC) of the European Psychiatric Association (EPA). I sincerely thank the supervisors Kristina Adorjan, Elias Wagner, the EPA - ECPC Chair Özge Kilic, and all the colleagues involved in this educational activity designed for us.

The programme consisted of series of sessions presented by the top researchers of the hosting institution, LMU. The subjects were diverse, including cutting-edge topics from promising experimental treatments in neurodegenerative disorders to use of machine learning in research design. It also included the opportunity to meet with Peter Falkai, the Clinical Director of Munich Center for Neurosciences and the president of the EPA.

The hosting institution was welcoming and they were ready to solve any problem. In fact, the sessions were all in accordance with the schedule there weren't any unpleasant surprises. The focus was usually on research design and novelties in the treatment of psychiatric disorders. The lecture given by Francisco Pan-Montojo was an especially interesting one, a very good example of connecting the preclinical research to clinical drug discovery: In that design, the ability of nematodes to survive in environments with lack of nutrients and water was suggested as a possible treatment mechanism for some of the neurodegenerative disorders in which the nerve cells' survival abilities were point of concern.

There were also sessions about psychotherapy, including "Cognitive Behavioural Analysis System of Psychotherapy for Persistent Depressive Disorder" and sessions about other diverse issues such as the effects of exercise from a neurobiological background and autism spectrum disorder in young adults. Furthermore, we were informed about The Munich Mental Health Biobank. With the data gathered in this biobank, big data analysis for psychiatric disorders will be possible.

The session about non-invasive brain stimulation in the depression has been particularly interesting for me because we implement electroconvulsive therapy in our institution for treatment resistance and learning about other available options has been a good opportunity.

After each session, I was able to rethink my ongoing studies with a different perspective with valuable ideas. For example; not excluding schizoaffective disorder as a confounding factor, but ways include this diagnosis to the analysis in a study. The machine learning paradigm emerged as an important topic for future research so I later participated a one-week workshop which was also given by the LMU within the hosting of European College of Neuropsychopharmacology. In my home institution, I am planning to give a presentation my experience and the studies I encountered in the LMU. This programme broadened my research interest and gave me ideas about planning educational activities even at times of turbulence like the covid-19 pandemic. After this occasion, I further advised my colleagues in my institution for applying and taking part in the programmes of European Psychiatric Association.